



**Interview by Jemma Purdey and Ahmad Suaedy with Siti Maemunah, Surabaya, 30 May 2014**  
**MA, Southeast Asian Studies, Sydney University, 2006-2008**

[00:00:06]	Studied at the University of Sydney from 2006 to 2008 for a master's by research in the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts. Her supervisors were Keith Foulcher and Michele Ford. Her topic was queer Indonesian cinema. Her undergraduate degree was in French studies, from Gajah Mada University (UGM), her master's (from University of Indonesia) was about Indonesian literature. [Explanation of how she came to choose that topic.]	Studying in Australia; Undergraduate education
[00:03:29]	Originally from Bangkalan, Madura. She has two brothers and two sisters. Her older sister is a sociology lecturer, her brother is a soldier. Her parents ran a small business and supported their children to go to university. She went to a local school and madrasa in the afternoon. Islam is important in her family. Her parents were open-minded and tolerant, accepting of her and her controversial master's topic.	Childhood; Family background; Early education
[00:06:54]	[Story about her family's acceptance of gay and lesbian people.] There are gay and lesbian people in Bangkalan.	Family; Community in Indonesia
[00:09:51]	Went to UGM because one of her uncles lectured at IAIN in Jogja and she lived with him. She was accepted to study at IAIN in 1990 but didn't feel she had strong enough pesantren background so went to UGM. Graduated in 1995 and taught French in a small university in Yogja for three years. In 1998 she moved to Surabaya and started to teach there. At high school she studied Japanese, Arabic and English and she thought she'd do something different at uni. She really enjoyed learning about philosophy, Foucault and French literature. From 2003 to 2005 she lived in Depok, Jakarta, and went to UI to do a master's studying Chinese–Malay literature.	Undergraduate education; Early career; Early education
[00:14:13]	She wanted to study overseas, going to Sydney was her first trip but since then she has been quite a lot. In July she's going to La Trobe uni for three weeks to do an international workshop with Gary Dowsett and Stephen McNally from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society. AusAID are covering her expenses. Her current research is about waria and HIV/AIDS prevention. Before going to Sydney she only applied for an Australian scholarship because there are many Australian alumni in her	Motivation to study overseas; Returning to Australia; Ongoing connections with Australia; Professional networks; Existing connections with Australia; Alumni network; Application process



	department, Department of English, and she talked to them. Her supervisor helped her with the application. She was successful the first (or second) time, maybe because the panelist had a gender studies background and asked her a lot about waria and was interested in her research proposal.	
[00:19:05]	After finishing her second master's she tried to move into ethnography and her current research is about waria and gays and MSM and lesbians in daily life. In 2010 she did a research project with the Indonesian National AIDS Commission in collaboration with AusAID and Global Fund. In 2011 she went to Madrid for an HIV/AIDS conference. Her current research is funded by Airlangga University's Tropical Disease Centre.	Research collaboration; Professional networks; International mobility
[00:21:03]	She likes Melbourne better than Sydney but one of her seniors told her Keith was a good supervisor and a kind person so she sought him out as a supervisor. She didn't know about his work on gay and lesbian issues. Keith was very supportive, he still edits her articles when they get accepted in international journals. [Explanation of how she became interested in waria, after studying other marginalised people.] Studying film wasn't easy when she was used to studying text. In 2011 she went to Amsterdam and Leiden for six months on a Dutch scholarship to study gender and sexuality.	Studying in Australia; Supervisor-student relationship; Ongoing connection with Australia; International mobility; Professional networks
[00:26:22]	In Sydney she lived in Marrickville, there were a lot of Asians living there and Asian shops, she heard about it from a colleague who was living there and invited Sita to live with her. There were a lot of AusAID scholars living there because it was cheaper than living closer to the campus. The scholarship was enough to live on. She socialised with other Indonesian students, got together to cook and eat. She helped Michele teaching Indonesian film and literature. It was good, opened the students eyes. Didn't have any problems with wearing her jilbab. She had a gay friend who introduced her to Mardi Gras, went every year, and to Gay Parade in Amsterdam. In Sydney there was a Gay Bali float, but no Indonesians in Gay Parade in Amsterdam.	Living in Australia; Scholarship experience; Indonesian community in Sydney; Gay and Lesbian community in Sydney; Friendships
[00:32:31]	Some of her Indonesian Studies students came to her house during lebaran. Every semester she, Keith and Michele would have lunch together. She watched SBS television, especially for films from other countries. She went to the movies every Monday, in Broadway and Dendy. Went to the Sydney Film Festival once. Went to the Opera House for a concert and with visiting	Socialising in Australia; Supervisor-student relationship; Australian culture; International mobility

	friends for a look. Her family didn't visit. In 2007 she did field work in Indonesia for two months, funded by AusAID and the department. The university also covered her airfare to a conference in Singapore.	
[00:37:13]	Submitted her thesis two weeks before the deadline so there was time to finish the administrative things and pack up. After her study she published articles in Indonesian and international publications.	Studying in Australia; Professional networks; Post-scholarship career
[00:40:12]	Is an informal member of GAYa NUSANTARA because of her role at the university. She's part of the HIV/AIDS cluster of the Tropical Disease Centre. In Sydney she went to Lakemba Mosque, her friend lived in Lakemba. At the uni there was a postgraduate room and they used that for prayer, the Faculty of Education also had a prayer room.	Community networks; Professional networks; Living in Australia; Religious community in Australia
[00:43:38]	Presented her work as a progress report to her supervisors every year. [Takes a phone call.]	Studying in Australia; Supervisor-student relationship
[00:45:35]	The connection with La Trobe happened when Pak Dede Oetomo introduced her to Gary Dowsett and she collaborated with Stephen McNally on research into MSM in Indonesia. [Story about controversy at the university because of comments on social media about a master class to which she had invited LGBT activists.]	Connections with Australia; Professional networks; Research collaboration; Community networks
[00:51:21]	[Discussion about the protest at an LGBT gathering organised by GAYa NUSANTARA in Surabaya in 2011.] Waria are happy to speak with Siti because they know and trust her. The workshop at La Trobe uni in July is a collaboration of activists, researchers and the LGBT community. [Comments about applying for the visa online and getting it in three days as a pdf file.]	Community networks; Returning to Australia
[00:54:34]	Siti meets every year with friends who are AusAID alumni. She gets the Sydney Alumni Magazine. Some of her students have been to Australia and one is doing a doctoral degree in the US. She has applied to do a PhD in Amsterdam but her parents think, apart from short courses, she should stay in Indonesia so maybe she'll do it at UGM. She is single and lives with a friend, who is also a lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities, in Surabaya; her parents live in Madura.	Alumni network; International mobility; Family; Post-scholarship career
[00:57:53]	[Exchanging email addresses, signing forms.] Michele sometimes comes to Surabaya. Siti wrote an article, about the Queer Film Festival, for Inside Indonesia in 2008.	Ongoing connections with Australia
[01:00:22]	END	

